



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

environs
KIMBERLEY
INC

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 6 February 2009

Premier urged to seek federal environment approval for Ord expansion

Environs Kimberley (EK) has written to the WA Premier Colin Barnett asking him to refer the proposed expansion of the Ord irrigation project to the federal Environment Minister for approval.

EK Freshwater Campaigner, Dr Gary Scott, said: "We are concerned that in an attempt to get bulldozers knocking over native vegetation in the proposed irrigation area as quickly as possible, the WA Government will not refer this proposal to the Commonwealth.

"We seek an assurance from the Premier that he, in his role as Minister for State Development and as the formal proponent of the Ord expansion, will seek Commonwealth approval for this project under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

"The previous WA Government had indicated that Commonwealth approval was likely to be required due to potential impacts of water extraction from the Ord River on Ramsar-listed wetlands and due to the impacts of native vegetation clearing and drainage water on EPBC Act-listed threatened and migratory species.

"With around \$400 million of state and Commonwealth funds earmarked to be spent on the Ord expansion, it is incumbent upon the Premier to ensure that a rigorous and transparent environmental approvals process is followed.

"Any short-cuts that may be taken by the WA Government in order to keep to its preferred development timetable would end up being to the detriment of the Kimberley environment. Slipshod approvals processes have resulted in the environmental havoc we now see in the Murray-Darling Basin. This must not be allowed to happen again.

"Indeed, the Ord expansion should not proceed at all if it does not pass the test of environmental sustainability", concluded Dr Scott.

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